



DIVISION OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL SERVICES

www.doh.sd.gov

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Community Health Services
Disease Prevention
Family Health
Health Promotion
State Epidemiologist

BRUCELLOSIS Fact Sheet

(undulant fever, Bang's disease, Malta fever, Mediterranean fever)

Office of Disease Prevention

(605) 773-3737

1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What is brucellosis?

Brucellosis is a bacterial disease of domestic and wild animals that may be transmitted to humans.

Who gets brucellosis?

Everyone is susceptible and may get the disease if exposed. It is more likely to be found in people associated with cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, or people who drink raw milk or unpasteurized dairy products.

How is brucellosis spread?

The bacteria causing the disease may be found in unpasteurized milk from diseased livestock and also in their blood, urine, tissues, vaginal discharges, placentas, and aborted fetuses. It is unlikely that this disease would be spread from person to person.

What are the symptoms of brucellosis?

Human symptoms of brucellosis include irregular fever, headache, weakness, sweating, chills, weight loss, generalized aching and other nonspecific flu-like symptoms.

How soon do symptoms appear?

The time period is highly variable, but symptoms usually appear within 5 to 60 days, commonly 1 to 2 months.

Does past infection with brucellosis make a person immune?

Long term immunity is uncertain.

What is the treatment for brucellosis?

Brucellosis is treated with antibiotics. Early diagnosis leading to prompt antibiotic treatment is essential to prevent chronic infection.

What can be done to prevent the spread of brucellosis?

Pasteurizing milk and limiting contact with infected cattle, sheep or goats will reduce the risk of infection. There are certain cattle and bison brucellosis vaccination requirements in South Dakota statute (SDCL 40-7) and administrative rule (ARSD 12:68:05). There is no evidence that the disease is transmitted person to person.

Can brucella be a bioterrorism weapon?

Yes. Brucella is considered a Category B bioterrorism agent.

Related Sites

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - Brucellosis information
http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/brucellosis_t.htm
 - Bioterrorism information
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov/agent/brucellosis/index.asp>